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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the specification as indicated below:

1. (Currently Amended) A monovalent cation containing well fluid consisting essentially of: a brine system and an amount of a starch derivative selected such that the well fluid has the following characteristics:

(a) a low shear rate viscosity greater than about 5,000 centipoise;

(b) a high shear rate viscosity at 511 sec^{-1} in the range from about 15 to about 70 centipoise measured at 120°F , wherein the brine system consists essentially of at least 0.6 equivalents per liter of a water soluble monovalent cation salt, wherein the anion of the salt is a halide, ~~wherein the monovalent cation salt is substantially free of divalent cations,~~ and wherein the well fluid is substantially free of xanthan gum.

2. (Original) The well fluid of claim 1, wherein the starch derivative comprises a pre-gelatinized crosslinked amylopectin starch which has been crosslinked to about 25% to about 60% of the maximum attainable viscosity.

3. (Original) The well fluid of claim 1, further comprising a particulate bridging agent which is substantially insoluble in the aqueous brine.

4. (Currently Amended) A method of treating a well that comprises:

adding a well fluid consisting essentially of a brine system and an amount of a starch derivative selected such that the well fluid has the following characteristics: